Value of Pearl
(a consumer study in Japanese market)

Nobuyuki Yagi and Shosuke Nakano
The University of Tokyo
Mie Prefecture
Ago Bay in Mie Prefecture
(Photo by Yagi)
Pearl Oyster Farming Area  (Photo by Yagi)
Mostly small-scale farmers

(Photo by Yagi)
Aquaculture of pearl was started by Mr. Kokichi Mikimoto in 1907 in this area.

(Photo by Yagi)
Japanese Pearl Productions and Imports
(Source: Gov't of Japan)

- **Domestic Production**
- **Export**
- **Import**

![Chart showing Japanese Pearl Productions and Imports from 1955 to 2015](chart.png)
Pearl is a unique fishery product used as jewelry

https://www.jalan.net/kankou/spt_guide000000181631/

https://www.pikara.net/spot/details.php?id=584
Research question: The value of pearls could include both jewelry value as well as anthropocentric value (namely, gift from the ocean or nature’s benefit to the people).

http://blog.jewel-serio.com/r-p.html

Research Method

• Online survey for residents in Tokyo metropolitan area
• Sample Size: 1,000 persons. Age and gender balance of samples are proportional to actual residential population.
• Survey Period: November 27 to December 1, 2017
• Main Questions Asked: Please write Japanese terms that explain characteristics of pearl and diamonds (free random writing was asked)
Results of text mining analysis
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diamond Only</th>
<th>Diamond and Pearl</th>
<th>Pearl Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hardness</td>
<td>Expensive</td>
<td>Shellfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Jewelry</td>
<td>Akoya Oyster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>Accessary</td>
<td>Mikimoto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut</td>
<td>Luxury</td>
<td>Mie Prefecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eternal</td>
<td>Beauty</td>
<td>Ago Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brightness</td>
<td>Special</td>
<td>Aquaculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Ring</td>
<td>Ceremonial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbon</td>
<td>Necklace</td>
<td>Necklace (Jp.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion and conclusion

- Diamond: Consumers tend to look at the product itself.
- Pearl: Consumers tend to look at producing methods and production sites.

- Exact estimation on the value of the nature (value of ocean): Estimation is not easy.
- Pearl and diamond have their own unique values in the social context.
- Relational values exists (memento or special gift)